United Nations S/2018/904

Security Council

Distr.: General
11 October 2018

Original: English

Letter dated 9 October 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Plurinational State of Bolivia, in its capacity as President of the Security Council during the month of October 2018, will hold an open debate on women and peace and security on the theme "Promoting the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda and sustaining peace through women's political and economic empowerment". The meeting will be held on 25 October at 10 a.m. at United Nations Headquarters in New York. To guide the discussion during the event and for more information about it, we have prepared the concept note attached hereto (see annex).

I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council, in connection with the item entitled "Women and peace and security".

(*Signed*) Sacha **Llorentty Soliz**
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to the United Nations

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Annex to the letter dated 9 October 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Concept note for the open debate in the Security Council on the theme "Promoting the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda and sustaining peace through women's political and economic empowerment" to be held on 25 October 2018

Introduction

1. As the President of the Security Council in October 2018, the Plurinational State of Bolivia will hold an open debate on women and peace and security. The debate will focus on women's political and economic empowerment and their meaningful and active participation in the pursuit of peace, from conflict prevention and conflict resolution to the implementation of initiatives targeted at women's economic recovery in the aftermath of conflict and their increased representation at all decision-making levels.

Background

2. The role of women in conflict resolution and peacebuilding has been historically neglected. For example, from 1992 to 2011 only 2 per cent of chief mediators and 9 per cent of negotiators in peace processes were women.[1] Building on the agreement reached by 189 countries at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, the Security Council has recognized this gap since 2000 and has adopted eight resolutions on women and peace and security. These have included many references to women's roles as active participants in all matters related to peace and security that have been reiterated multiple times but have not been adequately implemented. This debate will focus on the Council's repeated calls for women's political and economic empowerment, and the continued underrepresentation of women in efforts aimed at ending conflict, from formal and informal peace processes to the implementation of peace agreements.

3. For example, in resolution 1325 (2000), the Council recognized that effective institutional arrangements to guarantee women's full participation in peace processes can significantly contribute to the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security. In the resolution the Council called upon all actors involved in negotiating and implementing peace agreements to adopt measures that support local women's peace initiatives and indigenous processes for conflict resolution, and that involve women in all of the implementation mechanisms of peace agreements.

4. In resolution 1889 (2009), the Council expressed its deep concern about the persistent obstacles to women's full involvement in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and participation in post-conflict public life, as a result of violence and intimidation, lack of security and lack of rule of law, cultural discrimination and stigmatization, including the rise of extremist or fanatical views on women, and socioeconomic factors, including the lack of access to education, and recognized that the marginalization of women can delay or undermine the achievement of durable peace, security and reconciliation. The Council highlighted the particular needs of women and girls in post-conflict situations, including physical security, health services, including reproductive and mental health, ways to ensure their livelihoods, land and property rights, employment, as well as their participation in decision-

[1] UN-Women, "Women's participation in peace negotiations: connections between presence and influence," October 2012, sect. 2.

making and post-conflict planning. Stressing the need to focus not only on protection of women but also on their empowerment in peacebuilding, the Council in resolution 1889 (2009) underlined that women's capacity to engage in public decision-making and economic recovery often does not receive adequate recognition or financing in post-conflict situations, and funding for women's early recovery needs is vital to increase women's empowerment. In paragraph 1 of the resolution, the Council urged Member States and international and regional organizations to take further measures to improve women's participation during all stages of peace processes, particularly in conflict resolution, post-conflict planning and peacebuilding, including by enhancing their engagement in political and economic decision-making at early stages of recovery processes.

5. In resolution 2122 (2013), the Council recognized the need to address the gaps and strengthen links between the United Nations peace and security in the field, human rights and development work as a means to address root causes of armed conflict and threats to the security of women and girls in the pursuit of international peace and security, and also recognized that the economic empowerment of women greatly contributes to the stabilization of societies emerging from armed conflict. In paragraph 11 of the resolution, the Council urged Member States, United Nations entities and financial institutions to support the development and strengthening of the capacities of national institutions, in particular of judicial and health systems, and of local civil society networks in order to provide sustainable assistance to women and girls affected by armed conflict and post-conflict situations.

6. In resolution 2242 (2015), the Council welcomed the emphasis placed on achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, reaffirmed that women's and girls' empowerment and gender equality are critical to conflict prevention and broader efforts to maintain international peace and security, and emphasized that persisting barriers to the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) will only be dismantled through dedicated commitment to women's participation and human rights and through concerted leadership, consistent information and action, and support to build women's engagement in all levels of decision-making. In paragraph 1 of the resolution, the Council reiterated its call for Member States to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention and resolution of conflict, encouraged those supporting peace processes to facilitate women's meaningful inclusion in negotiating parties' delegations to peace talks, and called upon donor countries to provide financial and technical assistance to women involved in peace processes.

7. The importance of this link between women's empowerment and peace is clear even in the Security Council resolutions that are focused more on the protection of women than on their participation and leadership. For example, in resolution 2106 (2013), the Council affirmed that women's political, social and economic empowerment and gender equality are central to long-term efforts to prevent sexual violence in armed conflict and post-conflict situations, while recognizing that States bear the primary responsibility to respect and ensure the human rights of all persons within their territory and subject to their jurisdiction as provided for by international law.

Objectives

8. Since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), the Security Council has put in place a comprehensive normative framework that is typically articulated in four main pillars: prevention, participation, protection, and recovery. It is imperative that the international community adopt concrete measures to advance implementation of the

women and peace and security agenda in each of these pillars. The objective of this debate is to invite Member States to share specific actions that have been taken or are already planned to eliminate structural barriers that perpetuate gender inequality and ensure both women's meaningful participation in peace processes and the implementation of peace agreements and their political inclusion and economic recovery in post-conflict peacebuilding.

9. Despite remaining challenges, the peace process in Colombia, which has counted on the unanimous support of the Security Council since 2016, offers a positive recent example of concrete measures to implement the words of those resolutions of the Security Council on women and peace and security. The peace talks in Havana set up specific mechanisms to ensure the participation of women and women's organizations, and a gender subcommission mandated to mainstream a gender perspective in the peace accord, resulting in more than 100 provisions that are relevant to gender equality in the final agreement. The Government and its international partners have subsequently put in place further measures to ensure the representation of women and gender expertise in the mechanisms established to implement that peace agreement, and the United Nations has shown a similar commitment in the way in which the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia engages systematically with women leaders and women's organizations in its area of operations and has prioritized gender balance within the Mission, as evidenced by the fact that women represent 18 per cent of its military observers, 37 per cent of its police observers, and more than half of its civilian staff, much higher percentages than in other United Nations peace operations.

Guidelines for discussion

10. All Member States and regional organizations are invited to participate in the open debate and focus their interventions on the following topics:

- If they have recently supported peace processes or are currently participating in peace processes, participants are encouraged to share examples of good practice and specific interventions to include women in these processes. This should extend to women's participation beyond the peace table to encompass committees and institutional mechanisms set up to implement peace agreements, as well as more localized examples of conflict resolution, such as negotiations for humanitarian access, securing local ceasefires or the release of detainees.
- Participants are encouraged to share current examples of the actions they are taking to advance gender equality and empower women, both politically and economically, in the context of peace and security decision-making and post-conflict recovery.
- Participants may also share examples of the key obstacles that have prevented them from ensuring inclusiveness in recent or current peace processes.
- Member States and regional organizations should share the commitments they are adopting in their national action plans and other policy instruments to accelerate the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, as well as recommendations for improved coordination and capacity, including with the United Nations and its field operations.

Format

11. The open debate will be held in the Security Council Chamber on 25 October 2018, starting at 10 a.m. The debate will be chaired by a high-level representative of the Government of the Plurinational State of Bolivia. The Secretary-General will deliver a statement at the beginning of the open debate, followed by briefings from:

- Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.
- Randa Siniora Atallah, Director of the Women's Center for Legal Aid and Counselling, speaking on behalf of civil society.
- Additional briefer to be confirmed.

12. In accordance with the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2017/507), we encourage all participants to be succinct in their interventions, which should not exceed five minutes, and focus on specific examples, commitments and recommendations.

13. No outcome is expected to be adopted by the Security Council.